

There was no objection.

IN TRIBUTE

(Mr. VENTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise, as many of my colleagues have, to pay tribute to the two fallen Capitol Police officers Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut that so valiantly have demonstrated, I think more than anything, the importance of their work and the meaning of this Capitol Building. These buildings are the citadel of free expression and the rule of law, our Nation's Capitol; but beyond the symbolism and those flags that are today flying at half mast and the buildings and other structures, and is the liberty and freedom and the ideas that live in the hearts and minds of this Nation's pulse.

These two individuals that have sacrificed their lives obviously symbolize and exemplify the real meaning of this Nation and the real sacrifice and contribution the essence of our common bond and the cost of freedom that we pledge to one another that has made up our Nation in the past, today, and, we pray, tomorrow the democracy that it is. We extend our sympathies to the families, but celebrate their lives because they made a real difference and mourn the the families losses today.

I know that the people I represent want to extend their sympathy and support for the families and a recognition of the important role that the Capitol Police play in safeguarding our Nation's Capitol.

IN TRIBUTE

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, there are only a handful of words that can describe the emotions that we are all feeling today. But for a moment, all Americans should reflect on the words which describe Friday's actions of J.J. Chestnut and John Gibson: heroism, sacrifice, honor, commitment, duty.

Much has been said, appropriately so, about their heroism and about their dedication to duty. Much has been said about the appreciation and respect we in the Capitol community extend to the family and friends of these brave men who have given us the ultimate sacrifice.

I was traveling back home to Montana at the time of the incident, returning to my home State to speak to Members of the Montana Police Protective Association. In turn, these representatives of Montana's entire law enforcement community have personally asked me to convey their deepest condolences to the families and the associates of Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson. All Montanans are feeling the deepest sympathy over these

events, and we reach out in prayer and in support and in compassion today.

IN TRIBUTE

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a sad time for the United States Congress and for the American people. Today we mourn the tragic loss of Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson. We mourn for their families and the children they leave behind. And as we look back on their lives, let us also look forward. Let us look forward to the time when no individual needing mental health treatment falls through the cracks in our health care system. Let us look forward to the day when guns cannot find their way into our streets and our public areas.

Today we are united not just in our grief but in our respect, our admiration, and the utmost gratitude to these two officers. At this time of deep sorrow, words can never be enough to erase the pain we are feeling or to capture the full meaning of the selflessness and the bravery of John Michael Gibson and Jacob Joseph Chestnut. Words are not enough, but in our hearts and in our minds, their heroism will never be forgotten.

IN TRIBUTE

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, last Friday America's family room was invaded. I call the Rotunda in the United States Capitol America's family room, because this is where American tourists come and Americans come to see their government in action. The thin line between them, between safety and danger, safety and disaster, is the Capitol Hill Police.

Last Friday, Officers Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the sanctity of America's living room. The system worked. They protected the tourists, they protected Members of Congress, they protected the staff, and they were able to protect everyone but, unfortunately, themselves.

Every day hundreds if not thousands of tourists and employees and Members of Congress walk by these brave men and women, and often we take them for granted, not necessarily in a negative sense, but you know they are there, you know they have got a job to do, and you are doing yours and you do not really think about it, but over time they become family. You know them by face, not necessarily every time by name. You know them, you like them, you exchange greetings and so forth.

Then suddenly something like this happens, and it divides their job from your job and how important their job is and how ultimately their job endangers their lives as it protects our lives. I sa-

lute these brave men, I pray for their family, and our hearts and prayers are with them.

A PART OF AMERICA DIED

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, July 24, 1998, just a brief time after the last vote of the day was cast, two seasoned Capitol Hill Police officers were gunned down in one of the entrances to the United States Capitol, the People's House. Hearts were broken, and a part of America died.

There is a poem, one that is very fitting for this occasion, about fallen heroes, entitled "A Part of America Died Today." Its author is unknown to me but I ask that it be printed in the RECORD at this point, and I will state it in tribute to Officer J.J. Chestnut and Special Agent John Gibson.

Somebody killed a policeman today, and a part of America died.

A piece of our country he swore to protect will be buried with him at his side.

The suspect who shot him will stand up in court,

with counsel demanding his rights, while a widowed mother must comfort her kids

and spend alone many long nights.

The beat that he walked was a battlefield, too.

Just as if he had gone off to war.

The flag of our Nation does fly at half mast. To his name, they will add a gold star.

Yes, somebody killed a policeman today.

A cop put his life on the line.

Now his ghost walks a beat on a dark city street,

and he stands at each new rookie's side.

He answered the call and gave us his all, and part of America died.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself, my staff and the people of the Third District of West Virginia, I extend our deep sympathy, our prayers and our thanks to the families of these two fallen heroes, Officer J.J. Chestnut and Special Agent John Gibson, placing them in the comforting arms of God, asking his blessings upon them.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, July 24, 1998, just a brief time after the last vote of the day was cast, two seasoned Capitol Hill Police Officers were gunned down in one of the entrances to the United States Capitol—the People's House. Hearts were broken and, a part of America died.

Despite the chaos that ensued during and shortly after the first shots were fired, killing Officers J.J. Chestnut and John Gibson, both veterans of 18 years on the U.S. Capitol Police Force, it was with cool, deliberate bravery that they pursued and brought down the gunman, even as they themselves were dying. That they died to stop the gunman from getting more than a few feet inside the United States Capitol speaks eloquently of their training, their devotion to duty, their incredible courage, and their willingness to take full responsibility for the safety of others at the expense of their own lives.

These two officers saved countless lives last Friday, for had the gunman been able to